

State Fire Marshal Offers Fire Safety Tips To Kansas Seniors

State Fire Marshal Dan McLaughlin would like to remind Kansas's senior citizens to exercise increased precautions to ensure their safety against fire in the home.

Seniors are vulnerable because they often live alone or are unable to respond quickly. With education and planning, many of these fire deaths and injuries can be prevented.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), adults over 65 years of age are twice as likely to die in a fire when compared to the rest of the population. Adults over 85 have a risk that is four and half times that of the national average. The United States Fire Administration indicates more than 1,200 senior citizens die in fires each year.

Fire Marshal McLaughlin encourages senior citizens to:

- Install a smoke detector on each level of the home and inside each bedroom.

- Check the smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least twice a year. Caregivers are encouraged to check detectors for those who are unable to do it by themselves.

- Make a fire escape plan for the home and know two ways out of the home.

- Make any necessary accommodations, such as providing exit ramps and widening of doorways to facilitate an emergency escape.

- Speak to family members, the building manager or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it with them.

- Ask emergency providers to keep senior citizens' special needs information on file.

- In multi-story homes, make arrangements to sleep on the ground floor, if possible, or near an exit.

- Never smoke in bed or near an open oxygen source, gas stove or other flammable object.

- When cooking, don't leave pots and pans unattended. Use a timer to remind you of food in the oven. Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking.

- Don't overload electrical outlets or extension cords.

No matter your age, addressing fire safety issues and concerns before an emergency is essential it can mean the difference between life and death